














COUNTY OF MERCER
Office of
Emergency
Management



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

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Dear Resident of Mercer County,

Mercer County is working to make sure people are as prepared and ready as can be in the event of an emergency. By being informed and prepared, you can significantly reduce the risk to life and property.

This booklet prepared by the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management will tell you how you can help yourself and your families in emergencies. A lot of this information is based on common sense advice and may seem obvious or familiar to you, but it has saved lives in the past. The County of Mercer wants to remind you that emergency response plans and your family plans should be designed with a "All Hazard Approach" meaning that plans and preparedness for you and your family can be used regardless of the nature of the emergency.

Working together and creating preparedness plans will help keep your family safe in any type of emergency.

*Sincerely,
Brian Hughes
County Executive*



PREPARING FOR AN EMERGENCY— WHAT YOU CAN DO

To prepare for an emergency, you should take the time to find out:

- *where and how to turn off water, gas and electricity supplies in your home.*
- *the emergency procedures for your children at school.*
- *the emergency procedures at your workplace.*
- *how your family will stay in contact in the event of an emergency.*
- *if any elderly or vulnerable neighbors may need your help.*
- *how to tune to your local radio or TV station for information.*

Gather together a family disaster kit to have ready at home in case of an emergency.

In certain very unlikely situations, you may be asked to leave your home by the emergency service personnel. If this happens, leave as quickly and calmly as possible, taking your family disaster kit with you. And, if you have time:

- *turn off the electricity, gas and water supplies, unplug appliances and lock all doors and windows.*
- *take bottled water and blankets and tune in to a local radio station for emergency advice and instructions if you leave by car.*

When you are told that it is safe to return home, open windows to provide fresh air before reconnecting gas, electric and water supplies.

***In most emergencies in Mercer County,
the best advice is to***

GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN.

On rare occasions, Emergency Services will ask you to evacuate your residence, such as the past flooding of the Delaware River in areas of Trenton, Ewing and Hopewell.

GENERAL ADVICE ABOUT WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

If you find yourself in the middle of an emergency, your common sense and instincts will usually tell you what to do. However, it is important to:

- *make sure 911 has been called if people are injured or if there is a threat to life.*
- *not put yourself or others in danger.*
- *follow the advice of the emergency services.*
- *try to remain calm and think before acting, and try to reassure others.*
- *check for injuries—remember to help yourself before attempting to help others.*

If you are not involved in the incident, but are close by or believe you may be in danger, in most cases the advice is:

- *go inside a safe building*
- *stay inside until you are advised to do otherwise*
- *tune in to local radio or TV for more information*

Of course, there will always be particular occasions when you should not "go in" to a building; for example, if there is a fire. Otherwise: **GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN.**



The **GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN**, advice is recognized and used around the world. It was developed by the National Steering Committee On Warning and Informing the Public (NSCWIP) in London, England.



TUNE IN

If there is a major emergency, an agreement exists with radio and TV companies along with the Federal Communications Commission and State, County, and Local Offices of Emergency Management. Programming will be interrupted to give public safety advice and information using the EAS (Emergency Alert System) so that when you **TUNE IN**, you will get the advice and information you need. The FCC established the EAS system in November of 1994. The EAS replaced the Emergency Broadcast System (EBS) as a tool the President and others may use to warn the public about emergency situations.

SAFETY TIP

The County of Mercer has implemented a Community Notification System that will telephone homes with important information. This system is available countywide. Make sure that your home has at least one telephone that is plugged directly into your phone line and does not require a power source. Cordless phones do not work when electricity is cut off.

ADVICE, TIPS AND COMMON SENSE REMINDERS FOR COPING WITH SPECIFIC EMERGENCIES

The Emergency Services are trained to cope with a wide range of emergency situations, but there is a lot that you can do to help them and yourself.

FIRE PREVENTION AND SAFETY

- Reduce fire hazards in your home.
- Fit and maintain smoke alarms—at least one on every floor.
- Plan an escape route should fire break out at night.
- If there is a fire, get out, stay out and call 911.
- Never use an elevator.
- If moving or trapped in smoke stay close to the floor where the air is cleaner.
- If a door feels hot, do not open it, it probably means there is a fire on the other side.
- Remember—never re-enter your home until emergency services has made it safe.

Do not wait until a fire occurs to think about it. Nearly all fires are preventable. Practical, easy-to-follow advice on preventing fires and protecting your home and family is available from your local fire department and online from the National Fire Prevention Association (NFPA at <http://www.nfpa.org>)



EXPLOSIONS/BOMBS

If there is a bomb threat at your place of work, follow the advice of those in charge.

If there is an explosion in your building, look for the safest way out.

If you are trapped in debris:

- stay close to a wall and tap on pipes so that rescuers can hear you.
- do not use matches or lighters in case of a gas leak.

If there is an explosion outside your building, stay inside away from windows, elevators and outer doors in the event of a second explosion.

If you saw the explosions, stay in the area in a safe place and tell the police what you saw.



SEVERE WEATHER INCIDENTS

Have supplies at home to be able to **GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN.**
Monitor local radio and television for weather updates

EVACUATION

Have a plan and be prepared to leave home for several days if requested to do so by Emergency Services

SAFETY TIP

If there is a major power outage, turn off electrical appliances that will automatically switch on when power is restored. If several start at once, they may overload the system. **TUNE IN** to local radio stations for advice and updates using a battery operated radio.

Additional information is available on weather.com.

In Mercer County we experience several snow storms each winter that disrupt school, travel and work plans. When these snowstorms occur on a weekend, the demand on emergency services is significantly less than a storm occurring during the week. Weekend storms in the past make it clear that when people are able to
GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN,
the community at large is safer and better prepared.



CHEMICAL, BIOLOGICAL OR RADIOLOGICAL INCIDENTS

It is possible to be exposed to a chemical, biological, or radiological incident in our area either by some type of accident or purposefully.

The Fire and Rescue services have become equipped to decontaminate large numbers of people quickly. This involves showering with soap and water and then dressing in temporary clothing that would be provided. It is important that this takes place where the incident happened so that other areas, including homes, are not contaminated. If necessary, you would also be assessed by emergency medical services personnel.

Move away from the immediate source of danger. Wait for Emergency Services to arrive and examine you and, if necessary, decontaminate you. If you go home untreated, you could contaminate others and make the incident worse.

In Mercer County, fire companies, hospitals and HAZMAT (hazardous materials) teams are continually being equipped with needed supplies and technical equipment to detect and identify dangerous substances and conduct decontamination procedures.



IN ALL OF THESE SITUATIONS—KEEP CALM, THINK BEFORE YOU ACT AND LISTEN TO THE ADVICE OF THE EMERGENCY SERVICES

Emergency Plans exist in all of the municipalities in Mercer County

The police, fire and emergency medical services have plans for responding to incidents, from fires and explosions to hurricanes and tornadoes, whether they are at your home, your school, at work, or affecting transportation networks.

Hospitals and Health Departments

Emergency plans have been developed and emergency equipment is available for hospitals and health departments.

Emergency Planning Exercises

Every year, exercises are held throughout the county and municipalities involving emergency services. These exercises practice the response to a range of emergencies by testing preparedness.



WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE NOT AT HOME

Safety of your children

SCHOOLS

If your children are at school, you will naturally want to collect them as soon as possible in the event of a major emergency. But it may not be safe to do so. Please **TUNE IN** to your local radio or television stations for advice and for details of the arrangements your local school board has made for letting parents know when to collect their children from school.

All schools have plans to cope with local emergencies such as fire and flood, and teachers and support staff do all they can to look after the students in their charge. You can find out more about school emergency planning from <http://www.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emergencyplan/index.html>

In Mercer County, when a tornado struck parts of Trenton, Lawrence and Ewing, children at the Notre Dame High School were safe inside. During the first moments after the storm passed, driving to the school became more dangerous because of trees and power lines that had fallen.



SAFETY AND SECURITY AT WORK

BUSINESSES

Employers have a responsibility for the safety and security of their staff. All businesses should have arrangements in place to deal with the impact of a major incident or disaster. Make sure you understand what you need to do in an emergency at work.

If you are a business, for advice on
emergency planning go to

http://www.state.nj.us/njoem/preparedness_bizplan.html



BASIC FIRST AID

Knowing what to do in an emergency is vitally important. Consider getting some first aid training and a first aid kit and familiarize yourself with how to deal with some of the more common situations described. If someone is injured, the following steps will keep them as safe as possible until professional help arrives.



If people are seriously injured, call 911 immediately.

- Keep calm.
- Make sure you and the injured person are not in danger.
- Assess the injured person carefully and act on your findings using the basic first aid steps as described. Remember—this is not a complete first aid guide.
- Keep an eye on the injured person's condition until Emergency Services arrive.



UNCONSCIOUS

If the person is unconscious with no obvious sign of life, call 911 and ask for an ambulance. If you or any bystander has the necessary skills and training, give them mouth-to-mouth resuscitation or CPR while you wait for Emergency Services.

BLEEDING

Control severe bleeding by applying firm pressure to the wound using a clean, dry dressing and raise the injured area above the level of the heart. Lay the person down, reassure them, loosen tight clothing and keep them warm.

BURNS

For all burns, cool the area with clean compresses that have been rinsed in cool water. Once cooled, loosely cover the area with a dry sterile compress to keep out air and prevent infection. Keep the patient warm and call an ambulance.

BROKEN BONES

Try to avoid as much movement as possible.

For more information on First Aid on the web

<http://www.njredcross.org/>

or at

The Red Cross of Central New Jersey

707 Alexander Rd., Suite 101

Princeton, NJ 08540

Tel: (609) 951-8550

or your local First Aid Squad



Professor Kathleen Tierney, Director of the Disaster Research Center at the University of Colorado has been studying disaster response and disaster management for over 25 years. Professor Tierney has noted, *"The vast majority of live rescues are carried out by community residents who are at the scene of disasters, not by official response agencies or outside search and rescue teams."*

SAFETY TIP

Contact your local Emergency Management coordinator and inquire about taking a CERT (Community Emergency Response Team) 24 hour course in your town. Learn about shutting down utilities, first aid, search and rescue, terrorism and basic fire extinguishers to learn to protect yourself and your family in an emergency.



CERT Curriculum – website at
www.state.nj.us/njoem/cert/

In Mercer County, we believe effective, timely and accurate communication to citizens in an emergency, combined with ongoing efforts to provide simple basic training and knowledge to take care of themselves, their families and assist first responders, are important programs for the safety of everyone.



FAMILY DISASTER PLANNING

Develop a Family Emergency Plan that includes the following:

Disaster Plan

Decide where to go if at home, school, work, outdoors, or in a car when a flood, severe thunderstorm, or tornado warning is issued. Update these plans every school year and as places of employment and residence change.

Disaster Supply Kit

Be sure everyone in the family knows where your Family Disaster Supply Kit is located. During extreme heat, be sure to include the following in your Kit: extra water or juice, sun screen, and wide brimmed hats.

Communication Plans

Designate a friend or relative outside your town or area as your family contact in the event you are separated from family members during a flood, tornado, or in case a storm knocks out your electricity. In the case of a tropical storm or hurricane, designate someone outside the area affected by the tropical storm or hurricane as your family contact. Agree upon a place where the family members can meet if separated.

Evacuation Plans

Get a good map and plan various evacuation routes, avoiding low-lying areas. This is especially valuable in the event of flooding from rivers, streams, tropical storms, or flash floods. Do several test runs of different routes. In the event of a flash flood, remember that you will not be able to evacuate. Instead, immediately seek higher ground. For times of extreme heat, identify locations where you can escape sweltering conditions for hours at a time: a mall, a movie theater, or the home of a friend or relative.

Your Family Pet Plan

Make sure all dogs and cats are wearing collars and up-to-date identification. Have a safe place to take your pets if possible; most disaster shelters cannot accept pets.

Disaster planning, safety and supply kit information can be found at [fema.gov](https://www.fema.gov) and the weather channel at [weather.com](https://www.weather.com)



SAFETY TIP

PUT ICE ON YOUR CELL PHONE

In your phone book on your cell phone, make an entry name called ICE (In Case of Emergency) and list phone numbers to be called in an emergency. Emergency Services people are aware of the ICE program and will look for it on your cell phone.

FAMILY DISASTER KIT

These contents can be assembled over a five-month period on a weekly basis and perishable items should be changed or replaced every six months.

Essentials

Battery-operated radio • Flashlight • Extra batteries

Do not include candles, which cause more fires after a disaster than anything else.

Water

Three gallons/person, minimum, in a food-grade, plastic container • Additional water for sanitation.

Food

Minimum three-day supply of non-perishable food that requires no refrigeration or preparation and little or no water.

First Aid Kit

One for your home and one for each car.

Non-Prescription Drugs

Such as aspirin, antacids and other common medicines

Tools and Supplies

Paper/Pencil • Plastic Sheeting • Medicine Dropper
Needles/Thread • Signal Flare • Non-Electric Can Opener
Heavy Cotton or Hemp Rope • Whistle • Aluminum Foil
Cash/Traveler's Checks/Change • Crowbar • Compass
Utility Knife • Plastic Storage Containers
Map of the Area (*for locating shelters*)



Assorted Nails/Wood Screws • Pliers/Screwdriver/Hammer
Shut-off Wrench, to turn off household gas and water
Mess Kits, or Paper Cups, Plates and Plastic Utensils
Tape, Duct and Plumber's Tape or Strap Iron
Matches in a Waterproof Container
Patch Kit/Can of Seal-in-Air for Tires

Sanitation

Disinfectant • Household chlorine bleach
Soap, liquid detergent • Personal hygiene items
Feminine supplies • Plastic bucket with tight lid
Toilet paper, towelettes, paper towels
Plastic garbage bags, ties (for personal sanitation uses)

Clothing and Bedding

Sunglasses • Rain gear • Hat and gloves
Thermal underwear • Sturdy shoes or work boots
Blankets or sleeping bags • One complete change of
clothing and footwear per person

For Baby

Formula • Diapers • Bottles • Powdered milk • Medication

For Pets

Food • Leash, harness or carrier • Records of vaccinations
Non-tippable food/water containers

Important Family Documents

Important telephone numbers
Record of bank account numbers
Family records (birth, marriage, death certificates)
Inventory of valuable household goods
Copy of will/insurance policies
Copy of contracts/deeds/stocks/bonds
Record of credit card account numbers and companies
Copy of passports, social security cards
Immunization records



Family Medical Needs

Insulin • Prescription drugs • Denture needs
Extra eye glasses • Contact lenses and supplies
Heart/high blood pressure medication

Entertainment

Games and books

A detailed list of supplies needed can be printed from
www.weather.com/safeside

NJ Register Ready

This registration website allows residents with special needs and their families, friends and associates an opportunity to provide information to emergency response agencies so emergency responders can better plan to serve them in a disaster or other emergency.



TERRORISM



Helping to prevent a terrorist attack

If you believe there is an immediate threat to life, call 911.

- You may call your local law enforcement agency and discuss your information with them. In Mercer County, your town's law enforcement agency has the ability to evaluate and communicate possible terrorism information directly with county, state and federal authorities.
- You may also call a 24 hour toll free tip line to report tips or information about suspicious activity or behavior you think may be related to terrorism.

The number is 1-866-4 SAFE-NJ (1-866-472-3365)

- The information you provide will be researched and investigated by law enforcement before any police action is taken. Please give law enforcement an opportunity to decide whether the information you have may be valuable. Law enforcement needs your help to reduce the danger posed by terrorism.

POSSIBLE SIGNS OF TERRORISM

You may have vital information. If you see or come across anything that may be linked with terrorist activity, please tell the police. They want to hear from you.

Terrorists need:

- **A place to live:**

Are you suspicious about any tenants or guests?

- **To Plan:** *Have you seen anyone pay an unusual amount of attention to security measures at any location?*

- **Money:** *Individuals may set up bogus bank accounts, copy credit cards, return goods for large cash refunds.*

- **Equipment:** *If you are a retailer, do you have any cause to be suspicious about anything being purchased?*



KEEP ALERT

Terrorist bomb attacks mostly happen in public places, especially where people gather or travel.

- Be vigilant.
- Look out for suspicious behavior, vehicles or packages.
- Do not hesitate to tell the police.

The ability to prevent a terrorist attack does not depend on authorities alone, but also depends on you.

Links and useful information
and advice on terrorism
can be found at
www.njhomelandsecurity.gov



EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

The New Jersey State Office of Emergency Management works closely with the Mercer County Office of Emergency Management and the 13 Mercer Municipal Emergency Management Offices to continually improve our ability to respond to emergencies at the national, state, county and local level, in order to safeguard life and property and to quickly recover and restore vital community services. The Emergency Management system uses an "ALL Hazard" approach to planning for any type incident regardless of the nature. Planning is designed to respond to any man-made or natural disaster, incident or emergency.

More information on the Emergency Management System in New Jersey can be found at
<http://www.state.nj.us/njoem/>

REMEMBER

If you are involved in an emergency, it is important to:

- make sure 911 has been called if people are injured or if there is a threat to life.
- not put yourself or others in danger.
- follow the advice of emergency services.
- try to remain calm and think before acting and to reassure others.
- check for injuries – remember to attend to yourself before attempting to help others.

**If you are not involved in an incident or emergency, but are close by or believe you may be in danger, in most cases the advice is:
GO IN, STAY IN, TUNE IN.**





County of Mercer
Board of Chosen Freeholders

Brian Hughes
County Executive

Contributing Information In This Booklet:
HM Government UK
Federal Emergency Management Agency
NJ Office of Emergency Management
The Weather Channel
Mercer County Office of Emergency Management

PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

